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Germany

Biotechnology

Three Bt Corn Seed Varieties Registered in Germany 2005

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Report Highlights:

On Dec. 14, 2005, the German Seed Registration Office approved the registration of three Bt corn varieties for Germany. Now, unlimited crop areas can be planted with the three approved varieties. In 2005, 300 hectares were planted to one Bt corn variety in Germany.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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On December 14, 2005, the German Federal Seed Register (Bundessortenamt BSA) approved the registration of three Bt corn varieties for Germany. The three varieties are based on the GMO trait MON 810. Now, the three Bt corn varieties can be traded and planted without any quantitative limitations in Germany.

During the past few years, German farmers had the opportunity to plant MON 810 based corn varieties in Germany with area limitations. This year, about 300 hectares were planted with a Monsanto Bt corn variety. Fortunately, no major damages were made to these Bt cornfields. NGOs staged small-scale demonstrations at some of these farms. This year, the seed industry had an arrangement with a mixed feed company to buy the GMO corn crop and the corn from neighboring fields at normal market prices. The GMO corn will be stored separately and then be used to produce compound feed. The bagged feed will have a label stating "contains GMO corn" and most likely also "contains GMO soymeal".

Expectations for 2006 indicate that about 1000 hectares may be planted with GMO corn varieties. Trade contacts report that farmers in corn borer infested regions are quite interested in the new seeds but many fear that they might face problems either selling the crop or using the corn with local dairy herds. As a result, corn acreage with Bt varieties may be limited over the near term.

During the past few weeks the new German Federal Minister for Agriculture Horst Seehofer frequently stated in press interviews that he intends to make the German genotech law more practical. He views the current law as a hinderance for farmers intending to plant GMO seeds. GMO crops are gaining ground worldwide and that should also be possible in Germany, he said.